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CURRENT TREND IN WORLD MEAT CONSUMPTION

The total world supply of meat during 1950 exceeded the 1934-38 prewar average, but the general pattern of production and per capita meat consumption by countries is unlike that of the prewar period. Production in North and South America and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) has surpassed the prewar level, but output is below prewar in Europe. Accordingly, strong domestic demand coupled with increased supplies of meat have enabled the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay and many other countries in the Western Hemisphere to enjoy a per capita consumption of meat substantially in excess of the prewar average. In many cases, exportable surpluses from traditional exporting countries in the Western Hemisphere have been sharply limited.

MEAT 1/ : Summary of production, net trade and available supplies in specified areas in 1950, with comparison.

Continent or Area	Production		Net trade (+) imports, (-) exports		Available Supplies	
	Prewar	1950	Prewar	1950	Prewar	1950
	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds
North America 2/	18,606	25,449	-99	102	18,638	24,892
Europe 3/	26,827	422,190	42,989	42,477	29,785	424,595
South America 5/	7,845	9,446	-2,032	-1,355	5,813	7,964
Union of South Africa						
Oceania	671	947	46	-6	677	941
	3,226	3,492	-1,121	-1,321	2,104	2,171
Total, above	57,175	61,524	-257	-103	57,017	60,563

1/ Carcass meat - excludes edible offal, lard, rabbit and poultry meat.

2/ Includes Canada, Mexico, United States and Cuba. 3/ Includes the 21 countries shown in the following table. 4/Not strictly comparable with prewar, due to territorial changes. 5/ Includes Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

MEAT 1/: Production, net trade, and consumption, prewar average, 1949 and 1950

Countries	Production		Net trade		Exports		Apparent consumption		Per capita consumption	
	Prewar	1949	Imports	1949	Prewar	1949	1950	Prewar	1949	In pounds
	2/	2/	2/	2/	2/	2/	2/	2/	2/	Percent of prewar
Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	
Canada...	1,417	1,945	1,916	169	159	1,244	1,801	1,778	113	118
Mexico...	698	1,023	1,013	1	42	699	896	971	38	97
United States...	16,182	21,710	22,109	65	145	281	16,382	21,378	126	114
Cuba...	309	414	411	4	22	22	313	436	77	105
Austria...	617	400	530	48	24	11	629	424	541	66
Belgium...	693	636	713	4	96	1	741	732	61	84
Bulgaria 3/...	337	-	-	-	-	-	332	-	54	-
Czechoslovakia...	1,032	735	75	5	55	1	1,037	790	-	-
Denmark 4/...	1,105	897	1,120	5	572	328	589	504	531	124
Finland...	256	258	251	5	12	2	251	246	66	96
France...	4,015	2,955	4,334	47	9	60	4,062	4,246	4,274	105
Germany -Western 2/	7,471	2,588	3,596	150	194	1	271	7,621	2,782	102
Greece...	208	144	138	47	54	1	31	255	198	129
Hungary...	635	-	-	18	-	-	617	-	62	62
Ireland...	336	311	322	71	51	-	80	265	-	105
Italy...	1,490	1,440	1,480	115	52	1	39	1,605	1,492	105
Netherlands...	888	593	887	64	44	1	56	824	596	102
Norway...	223	203	240	2	2	9	6/	225	212	102
Poland 2/...	1,598	-	-	100	-	-	1,498	-	4,242	105
Portugal...	290	355	345	6/	-	1	1	290	347	102
Romania 2/...	825	-	-	6	-	-	2	819	1,519	102
Sweden...	649	651	672	16	1	31	47	633	768	102
Switzerland...	419	371	406	17	12	1	14	436	387	102
United Kingdom...	2,852	2,097	2,631	3,422	2,611	1	2,967	6,272	4,708	102
Yugoslavia...	888	-	-	19	-	-	1	869	-	102
Soviet Union 2/...	7,292	-	-	3	-	-	1	7,295	-	102
Argentina...	4,330	5,289	5,074	1,460	1,161	1	974	2,870	4,001	102
Brazil 2/...	2,214	2,857	2,947	211	94	1	66	2,003	2,763	102
Chile...	349	374	397	21	2	1	3	228	372	102
Paraguay 2/...	167	198	193	16	31	1	18	151	167	102
Uruguay...	785	845	835	324	296	1	294	461	549	102
Union of South Africa...	671	954	947	6	10	1	6	677	941	102

1/ Carcass meat - excludes edible offal, lard, rabbit, and poultry meat. 2/ Prewar averages are for years 1935-39 for United States, Canada, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, 1936-38 for Greece, Rumania, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, 1936 for Czechoslovakia, 1938 for the Soviet Union, and 1934-38 principally for others. 2/ Prewar territory. 4/ Includes carcass meat equivalent of live animal exports. 5/ Prewar averages include prewar territory. 6/ Less than 500,000 pounds. 7/ Excludes farm production and consumption. 8/ Beef and veal only. 9/ Year ending September 30.

Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Prepared or estimated from official statistics, United States foreign service reports, and other information. Data relate to present frontiers unless otherwise noted.

On a world basis, stocks are normally small and relatively unimportant in a perishable commodity like meat. It is exceedingly difficult to stockpile large supplies of meat for an appreciable period.

Consumption of meat in Europe on a per capita basis increased slightly during 1950 when compared with 1949, but remained below prewar levels in all countries except France. As a whole, not only have net imports continued below prewar, but total meat production is under the prewar level. Nevertheless, many European countries which imported large quantities of meat in postwar years have now increased domestic production to gain self-sufficiency. In some cases, these countries have started modest export programs. Considering increases in human population and a general shortage of livestock feed in Europe, the prewar per capita meat consumption level may not be reached for some time. Rationing has been eliminated in most countries, but continues in the United Kingdom and in many Iron Curtain countries.

There is conclusive evidence that the pattern of meat consumption has been altered in the past decade. Rationing and price control during the war period tended to distribute more equally available meat supplies. Consequently, many people in the relatively lower income groups developed a taste for meat. This factor created a greater demand for meat in postwar years. It is also true that during the early postwar years when supplies of other consumer goods were restricted, an even higher proportion of consumer incomes was available for meat.

Per capita consumption in the United Kingdom was estimated at roughly 110 pounds in 1950. This is a substantial increase when compared with 1949, but is still below prewar. A substantial rise in the domestic meat output in the United Kingdom coupled with an increase in liftings from Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Poland contributed to offset the decline in exports from Argentina. The outlook is for an improvement in the level of meat consumption as a result of the new agreement with Argentina and the increased domestic output. However, a fundamental problem remains with regard to reaching prewar consumption levels in view of the apparent difficulties that Argentina, Australia and other countries are having in exporting at prewar rates. With this in mind, the British Government has been emphasizing greater domestic meat production.

In North America, consumption of meat in 1950 was substantially above prewar levels. Demand for meat continued firm notwithstanding the fact that prices generally increased. Per capita consumption of meat in 1951 probably will not differ much in total from 1950. In the United States, more cattle are being added to herd inventories at the expense of current beef output, but pork consumption may be greater in 1951. Per capita consumption of meat in the United States for 1950 was estimated to have been close to 144 pounds. This is on a par with 1949, but below the near record year of 1947 when meat consumption in the United States was estimated close to 155 pounds per person. The outlook for 1951 is for a slight decline from the 1950 level.

Per capita meat consumption in the important meat exporting countries of Argentina and Uruguay declined slightly in 1950 as compared with 1949. Human population increases which were stimulated by immigration in postwar years, plus a severe drought in late 1949 and 1950, reduced meat output and seriously curtailed the exportable surplus of beef. Per capita consumption in Argentina and Uruguay is estimated at around 232 and 230 pounds, respectively--the highest in the world. In an effort to increase supplies of meat for export, the Government of Argentina has attempted to reduce the per capita disappearance.

In Oceania per capita meat consumption has tended to decline slightly. Consumption is above prewar levels in New Zealand, but below in Australia. According to available data, New Zealand has expanded meat production to keep pace with the human increment, while per capita meat consumption in Australia has tended to lag somewhat in postwar years. Per capita consumption of meat in the Union of South Africa during 1950 was estimated to have been around 9 percent above prewar.

Because of larger livestock populations on farms and ranches, the prospects appear favorable for a continued rise in world meat production. However, a greater per capita meat consumption may be limited by increases in the human population. Meat output will be contingent upon the extent to which livestock holdings might have to be reduced or could be increased in keeping with the available feed supply. Demand will continue strong. Based on current information it is likely that the 1950 world meat production level will be surpassed in 1951.

By George J. Dietz, based in part on U. S. Foreign Service reports.

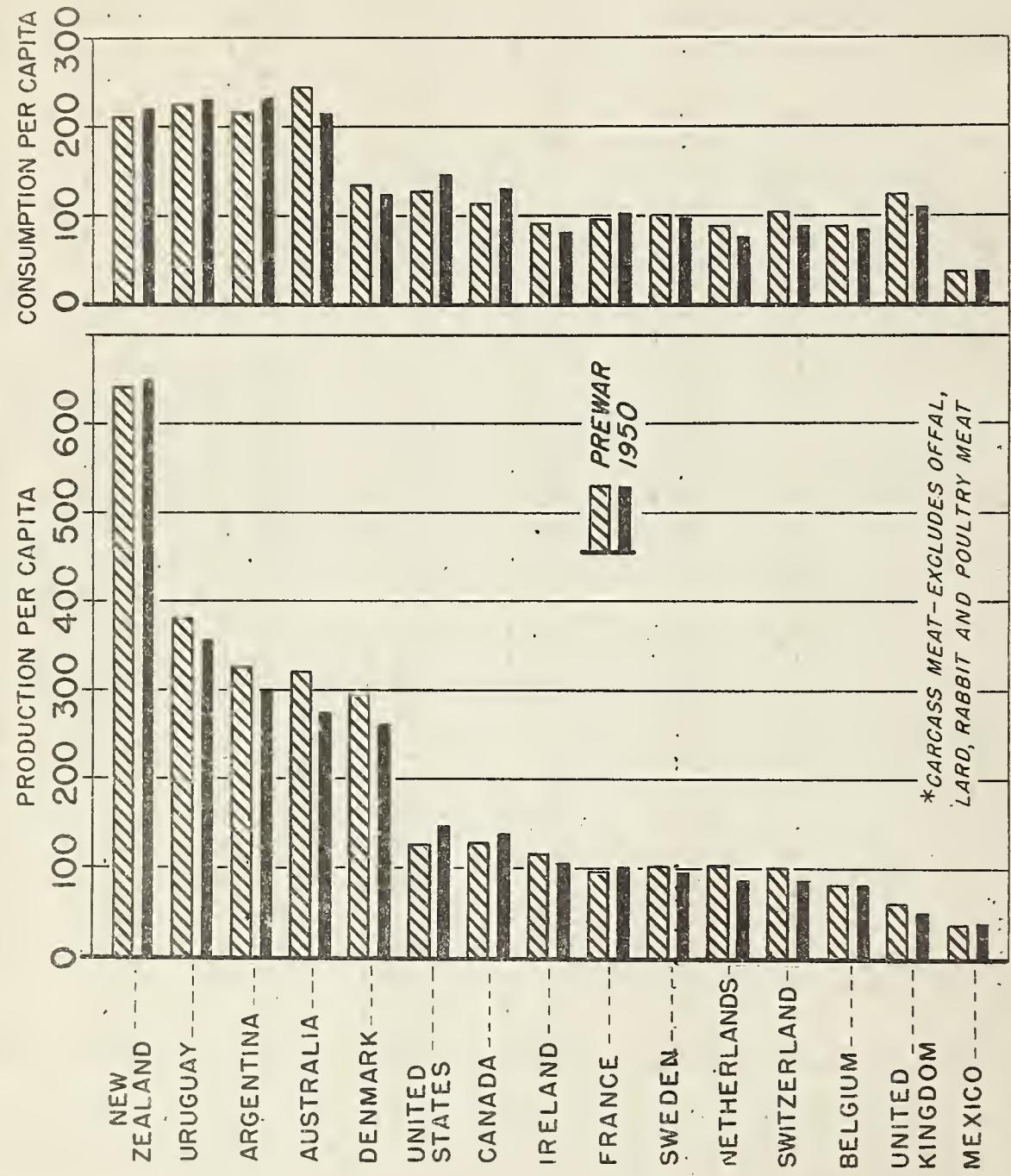
MEAT 1/: Per capita consumption in specified countries,
prewar and annual 1946-1950.

Country	Prewar	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950
	2/	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
Canada	113	140	139	129	133	129
Mexico	38	40	38	41	37	38
United States	126	153	155	145	144	144
Cuba	77	83	89	88	84	81
Austria	92	55	60	61	61	77
Belgium	89	90	86	83	85	84
Bulgaria	3/	54	-	-	-	-
Czechoslovakia	72	61	93	60	63	-
Denmark 4/	134	137	139	120	129	124
Finland	66	45	55	58	62	62
France	97	76	80	92	102	102
Germany, Western	3/	113	-	-	59	81
Greece	36	27	27	27	25	21
Hungary	69	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	90	104	108	92	87	81
Italy	38	27	26	31	32	33
Netherlands	89	50	52	49	60	76
Norway	78	51	59	51	64	73
Poland	3/	44	-	-	-	-
Portugal	43	30	35	41	42	40
Rumania	3/	42	-	-	-	-
Sweden	101	97	97	91	95	99
Switzerland	105	67	80	76	83	89
United Kingdom	124	109	103	88	93	110
Yugoslavia	57	-	-	-	-	-
Soviet Union	3/	44	-	-	-	-
Argentina	215	224	230	232	240	232
Brazil	53	49	51	54	57	58
Chile	73	77	75	74	65	67
Paraguay 5/	165	143	167	186	128	125
Uruguay	225	199	206	226	236	230
Union of So. Africa	70	78	77	82	80	76
Australia	245	191	199	220	230	214
New Zealand	219	219	200	199	219	219

1/ Carcass meat basis - includes beef and veal, pork, mutton and lamb, goat and horse meat; excludes edible offal and lard. 2/ Prewar average is for years 1935-39 for United States, Canada, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, 1936-38 for Greece, Rumania, Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom, 1936 for Czechoslovakia, and 1934-38 principally for others. 3/ Prewar territory. 4/ Includes carcass meat equivalent of live animal exports. 5/ Beef and veal only.

MEAT* PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION PER CAPITA

SPECIFIED COUNTRIES; PREWAR AND 1950



*CARRASS MEAT—EXCLUDES OFFAL,
LARD, RABBIT AND POULTRY MEAT